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ABSTRACT

Although many methods of publishing scholarly work are available to the author, self-publishing is sometimes the most appropriate avenue to provide the work to the intended audience particularly if the scope of the material is of interest to a limited number of scholars. Topics include: copyright issues; cataloging data; factors influencing the decision to self-publish; compiling the bibliography and selecting software to compile the bibliography; selecting and working with a publisher; determining the target audience; marketing and advertising the book; and accounting procedures. These phases of the process are described for the publication of the "Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection Bibliography, Volume 1: Pashto and Dari Titles," a title self-published by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. (Author/AEF)

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Getting it Published:
The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Self-Publishing
by
Shaista Wahab and Janice Boyer

Abstract

Although many methods of publishing scholarly work are available to the author, self-publishing is sometimes the most appropriate avenue to provide the work to the intended audience particularly if the scope of the material is of interest to a limited number of scholars. Factors influencing the decision to self-publish, selecting and working with a publisher, determining the target audience, marketing and advertising the book, and accounting procedures are described for the publication of the *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection Bibliography, Volume 1: Pashto and Dari Titles*, a title self-published by the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"Approximately 40,000 books are published every year. Publishers reject almost ten times that number of submitted manuscripts. Today, many people are dismissing those odds and are turning to an entrepreneurial alternative: self-publishing."¹ Many familiar books were originally self-published including *The Christmas Box* and the *Hank the Cowdog* books. Often books are rejected by publishers because their commercial success is uncertain. A self-publisher accepts all of the financial risk but retains editorial control and reaps all of the profits. Although some works are not destined to be commercial successes, the information they contain may be very important to a target audience. Self-publishing may be the only way to provide the book to those who need it. After exploring several publishing possibilities, the decision to self-publish a bibliography of the holdings of the *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection* was made at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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Why Compile and Publish a Bibliography?

The idea to compile a bibliography of the Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection was initiated during a meeting of the University of Nebraska at Omaha Library International Affairs Committee, Afghanistan Subcommittee. The goals of this committee were to further the international dimension of education at UNO through sponsoring programs and promoting the acquisition and use of library collections pertaining to international affairs.² UNO has had strong ties with Afghanistan since the 1970s when faculty/student exchanges were begun and the Center for Afghanistan Studies was established. The members of the Afghanistan Subcommittee agreed that a printed bibliography of the Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection, the only collection of Afghanistan materials in the United States and possibly the largest collection in the West, would further the international dimension of education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection

The collection contains approximately six thousand titles in more than 24 different languages published in various countries. The majority of the materials in the collection are in English, Persian (Dari) and Pashto languages. (Persian and Pashto are the two official languages of Afghanistan). Some four thousand titles have been cataloged and are accessible to scholars online through OCLC and the UNO Library online catalog, GENISYS.

The UNO Library continues to expand the scope of the collection and to acquire more materials on Afghanistan. Publishers' catalogs, bibliographies, online databases, and many other sources are reviewed in order to identify Afghanistan materials that should be added to the collection. Several private collections have been purchased, and gift materials have been received from a variety of scholars. Private collections, manuscripts, out-of-print materials, notes, journals, diaries and artifacts of Afghanistan scholars have made this collection very unique. The purpose of the bibliography was to introduce this collection of Afghanistan materials to scholars and researchers who are unable to obtain research materials anywhere else.

The situation in Afghanistan for the past 16 years has made it impossible for scholars to conduct their research in Afghanistan or to get their needed research materials from Afghanistan. The continuous war has destroyed all the research facilities, educational institutions, museums and libraries.³ The *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection* at UNO has gained an international reputation and serves as a center for Afghanistan studies to national and international scholars.

Compiling the Bibliography

Members of the Afghanistan Subcommittee worked on details of how to compile the bibliography, what information should be included, and how the information should be presented.

The decision was made to publish the bibliography in two volumes. The first volume, completed early in 1996, includes more than 800 titles in Dari (Persian) and Pashto languages. The second volume will contain English and other European language titles. The bibliography is arranged by subject, and within each subject it is arranged by the last name of the author. In the absence of an author, the entry is arranged by the title.

Each entry includes the basic bibliographical information such as author, title, publisher, place and date of publication, number of pages and the language of the text. Some entries also include a brief annotation. A number has been assigned to each entry that corresponds with the index and facilitates locating an entry as is indicated from the following examples:

10 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Almanacs and Atlases

61. Ayazi, Muhammad Azam
10000 Pushto lughatunah. Kabul: Pushto Tolanah; 1320. 792 p.
Pushto and Dari.
Pushto language dictionary.
62. Azad, Asrar Ahmad
Jebi siyasi dairat al-maarif. Asrar Ahmad Azad; translated from Urdu by Ghaws Shahamat. Kabul: Da Ittila'ato aw Kultur Vizarat, da Pushto da Inkishaf aw Taqwiyi Amiriyat; 1352. 3, 6, 186 p.
In Pushto.
Title on p. [4] of cover: A short political encyclopedia in Pashto.
Dictionary of political terminology.

Index

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| 10000 Pushto lughatunah, 61 | Ahadis Hazrat Muhammad Rasul Allah, 759 |
| Abavi, Yahya Amir, 123 | Ahmad, Sayyed (Mawilana), 519 |
| Abbas Khan Sarvani, 512 | Ahmad bin Fazlan, 520 |
| Abdul Ghani, 215 | Ahmad Shah Durrani, Afghan Emperor, 219, 220, 521 |
| Abdul Hayy, Muhammad, 718 | Ahmadzai, Musa Khan Akbarzad, 522, 523 |
| Abdul Rahim, 513 | Ahsan al-tavarikh, 584 |
| Abdul Rahman Khan, Amir, 514, 515 | |
| Abdul Raziq Khan, 719 | |
| Abidat nafisah Herat, 599 | |

Selecting Software

After examining available software that could be used to compile the bibliography, ProCite was selected. OCLC records that had been created for the entries were exported into ProCite. After completing the entries, the ProCite file was converted to WordPerfect for final editing. The WordPerfect file needed a great deal of revision and it was a very time consuming task to put the entries in a form suitable for publishing. Since this project began, the online catalog has opened various avenues to manipulate data that were not available at that time. Today there may be better software available to create bibliographies than what was available when this project began.

Why Choose to Self-Publish?

The project had been identified and the methodology for completing the work established. The question of how to get the bibliography in print needed to be addressed. Many avenues were explored, including applying for grants, but those efforts were not successful. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan was not as significant internationally as it once had been and there were fewer funds to support such projects. It was finally decided that the most expedient method of getting the book in print was to self-publish. The financial risks were considered and the goal was to at least break even. It was known that a publication of this type would never have a large audience but the information was valuable to scholars. The Associate

Director for Administrative Services at the UNO Library identified available university funding and secured the necessary permission to use the funds for printing the book.

There are many avenues open to someone who wishes to self-publish a book. Publication may be as simple as typing the manuscript on a typewriter and running it off on a photocopy machine or a publisher who publishes books for a fee may be selected. Since this was a project that was targeted to scholars, it was decided to select a good quality publisher to print the bibliography.

Choosing a Publisher

When investigating publishers many factors should be considered including the quality of their work, their location, communication, payment methods, and services available. The most critical factor is to examine examples of their work. This will provide a valuable indication of the quality of their product. It is usually easier to work with a local publisher or at least one not far away. Close proximity will make it easier to deliver manuscripts and to have the published copies delivered. Communication is also important. When contact is first made, the publisher should explain the procedures necessary to complete the book and they should take the time to answer all questions. The payment method required should also be considered. An initial payment is certainly justified, but final payment should never be made until all copies are received and examined for accuracy. A copy of a sample contract should

be requested and discussed with the institution's legal counsel if necessary. The contract should be carefully examined so that all provisions are understood. Publishers may also provide services such as copyright registration, obtaining an ISBN number, marketing assistance, or placing a barcode on each copy. These services and their costs should be explored and included in the contract.

Working with the Publisher

After a publisher has been selected, many decisions need to be made. The size of the publication, binding, the cover design, illustrations, and editing are all very important. Registering the copyright and obtaining the ISBN and LCCN numbers are also issues that must be addressed.

The size of the publication and the binding will vary depending on the subject matter of the book and the cost. For the bibliography, it was decided that the book would be 6" x 9", softcover, and perfect bound. The cover design should be attractive. A picture, a map, or a photograph could have been selected for the cover of the bibliography, but the best choice seemed to be black, red, and green stripes with white print. These three colors have historical significance for Afghanistan and they are the colors of the Afghan flag. Black is for the period that Afghanistan was under the British rule. Red signifies the blood shed to gain independence from the British. Green is for independence. The cover turned out to be very eye-catching.

Illustrations are a very nice addition to a publication. These may include photographs, maps, plates, graphs, or other items. The publisher will need to know the size and where the illustrations should be located. An additional charge should be expected for the inclusion of illustrations.

Careful editing is essential to a good publication. Some publishers have their own editors who will check for punctuation, grammar, spelling, and other errors, but when self-publishing, the author should expect to do the editing. The publisher will send a draft copy to the author for review. Corrections should be indicated and returned to the publisher. The author then will have an opportunity to examine the corrections before the manuscript is printed. After a final approval from the author, the manuscript is ready go to the printer. After the book is printed, the author must review it carefully to make sure that everything is correct.

In the case of the bibliography, six copies of the completed book were sent for review. On examining the copies, it was discovered that one page was printed twice and one page was missing. Although 500 copies had already been printed, the error was with the printer and the entire run had to be reprinted. There was no additional cost to UNO, but the problem did cause a ten day delay.

Copyright

Registering the copyright is very important for a self-published book. The Copyright Act grants the author:

- reproduction right
- distribution rights
- adaption rights (prepare new work based on the protected work)
- performance and display rights (such as a stage play or to display the work in public)

The author may sell the copyright or give permission to others to use some or all parts of his/her rights. The copyright notice should include the copyright symbol, the publication date, and the name of the copyright owner.⁴

Many publishers will register the copyright for you but if they do not, fill out the appropriate registration form and send the application and the required fee to:

Copyright Office.
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

ISBN

The International Standard Bibliographic Number (ISBN) is a ten-digit number assigned by each publisher and administered by the R. R. Bowker Co. The number identifies the country of publication, the publisher and the title of the book. It has nothing to do with the copyright and has no legal value. The publisher is responsible for obtaining the ISBN. It cost the publisher of the bibliography \$125 for a series of about 100 numbers.

If you are self-publishing and not using a publisher to print the work, you will need to contact the ISBN Agency and ask for a publisher identification number. The address is:

ISBN Agency
121 Chanlon Road
New Providence, NJ 07974
908-665-6770⁵

Library of Congress Catalog Number

The Library of Congress Catalog Number (LCCN) is obtained from the Library of Congress on request. Publishers normally obtain this number. If you are self-publishing, contact the Library of Congress and get the form called "Request for Preassignment of Library of Congress Catalog Card Number." There is no charge to obtain LCCN. Fill out the form and send it to the Library of Congress along with a photocopy of the title page to the following address:⁶

Library of Congress
Cataloging in Publication Division
Washington, D.C. 20540

Marketing and Advertising

Once the book is completed or nearing completion, a marketing effort should be undertaken. Some publishers or other companies will do marketing for a fee. The subject matter of the work and intended audience will determine what type of marketing will be successful and practical.

Considering the nature of the bibliography and the fact that the target audience was well-known, most of the

marketing was done by the author. The following are some of the methods that were used for publicity:

- Distributed pre-publication flyers
- Posted information regarding the publication on relevant newsgroups on the Internet including the Middle East Librarians Association and the European Middle East Librarians groups.
- Announced the publication at the Middle East Librarians' Association (MESA) annual meeting. Order forms were provided and the author spoke to the group about the project.
- Order forms were distributed at the 1995 Middle East Studies Association (MESA) annual meeting.
- Letters and order information were sent to those libraries that have an interest in Afghanistan or an interest in the region.
- Letters and order information were sent to some of the individuals who have used the collection.
- Organizations and institutions who have sent scholars to use the Afghanistan collection were contacted and order information was provided.
- The author was interviewed by the Voice of America.
- Reviews were sent to subject related journals.
- The book was cataloged on OCLC.
- Copies were added to the UNO Library collection both in the Afghanistan collection and the general stacks. People who browse the shelves or who search the online catalog will locate the book.

The book was also included in the publisher's catalog that was sent to bookstores, distributors and included in various mailings. The publisher also provided a very nice order form designed to our specifications that has been very useful.

**ARTHUR PAUL
AFGHANISTAN
COLLECTION
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

VOLUME I:
Pashto and Dari Titles

Shaista Wahab

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6"X9", photos

Dageforde Publishing
Lincoln, Nebraska

The Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection is a comprehensive collection consisting of materials in English and the two official languages of Afghanistan, Pashto and Dari (Persian). In addition, there are publications in many other languages including German, French and Russian. *The Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection Bibliography: Volume I: Pashto and Dari Titles* details the collection located at the University Library, University of Nebraska at Omaha. It was compiled by Shaista Wahab who is a Special Collections Cataloger at the Library

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Country _____

SAMPLE ORDER FORM

Pricing the Book

The purchase price for the book will depend on several factors. The actual cost of production certainly needs to be considered. The goal of at least breaking even and perhaps making a small profit is a worthy one. How much you think customers will pay is also important. The bibliography was priced at \$20. A charge of \$3.50 for domestic mailing and \$8.00 for overseas was added to cover shipping and packaging costs. The printing cost was about \$8.50 per copy. When you consider the time invested by the author and marketing costs, the \$20 price seemed very reasonable. Due to the unique nature of the work, customers who wanted this information would pay that much or more.

Accounting

The amount of accounting necessary will depend on your situation. If the book is published by an individual, the sales are income that must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. For those publishing for an institution, as was our situation, it is necessary to investigate all of the regulations. For the UNO Library it was fairly straightforward. The funds are deposited to the same account that was used to pay for the printing. An accounting code that distinguishes the entry as a book sale is used for easy tracking.

Sales tax was an issue that had to be resolved. There is no sales tax to buyers from outside Nebraska nor to publicly supported Nebraska libraries. If sales are made to others in Nebraska, sales tax is deducted from the purchase price. This was an easier method than adding sales tax. Initial sales have all been international or out-of-state. If international sales are anticipated, payment should only be accepted in U.S. dollars.

Conclusion

Self-publishing a book is a long and difficult process. Writing or compiling the information to be included can be a painstaking task. There are many factors to consider to successfully publish your work. We hope our experience in publishing the *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection Bibliography* will be of assistance to anyone considering a similar project.

Endnotes

1. Stephen Wagner. A Guide to Successful Self-Publishing. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992. p. 4-5.
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3. Nancy Hatch Dupree. "Museum Under Siege." Archaeology, vol. 49, no. 2, March/April, 1996, pp. 42-51.
4. Stephen Fishman. The Copyright Handbook: How to Protect and Use Written Works. 2nd. ed. Berkeley: Nolo Press, 1994, p. 2/2, 2/5.
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*